

**REMARKS**

In view of the following remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Office Action of October 26, 2004, are earnestly solicited.

Claims 2, 4—13 and 15—20 remain pending in the application.

Claims 2, 6—8, 10, 13, 15—18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaplicki et al. (U.S. 6,474,723 or 6,482,486) in view of DE '903. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 2, as amended in the prior response, calls for "a generally tubular body having an outer perimeter parallel to and in abutting engagement with an inner perimeter of the first tubular frame member." Independent Claim 17, as amended in the prior response, calls for "a tube having an outer perimeter substantially mating and in abutting engagement with an inner perimeter of a tubular portion of the first frame member."

Neither Czaplicki et al. (see Figs. 4 and 5) nor DE '903 (see Fig. 3) disclose this limitation. Czaplicki et al. has a reinforcing medium filling the void between sleeve 20 and B-pillar 5. Furthermore, if Czaplicki et al.'s sleeve were in abutting engagement with the B-pillar, the C-shaped bracket 30 of Fig. 2 would not fit within the B-pillar. The Examiner has conceded that DE '903 does not teach a tube in abutting engagement with an inner perimeter of the first frame member. Therefore, Claims 2 and 17 and their respective dependent Claims 6—8, 10, 13, 15—16 and 18, 20 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 4 and 5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaplicki et al. and further in view of Aloe et al. (U.S. 6,047,988). The rejection is

respectfully traversed.

Claims 4 and 5 each depend directly from Claim 2 and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 2.

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaplicki et al. in view of Benedyk (U.S. 5,458,393). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 9 depends indirectly from Claim 2 and is therefore believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 2.

Claims 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Czaplicki et al. in view of Janotik (U.S. 5,209,541). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 11 and 12 each depend indirectly from Claim 2 and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 2.

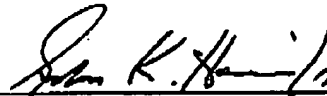
Claims 17—20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE '903 in view of Czaplicki et al. (U.S. 6,474,723). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, neither DE '903 nor Czaplicki et al. disclose a "tube having an outer perimeter substantially mating and in abutting engagement with an inner perimeter of a tubular portion of the first frame member." Therefore, Claim 17 and its dependent Claims 18—20 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 4—13 and 15—20, as previously presented, are believed to be in condition for allowance, early acknowledgment of which is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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